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New Tape, Said to Be From Hussein, Urges Iraqis to Resist

By ROBERT F. WORTH

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Aug. 1 — Middle Eastern television stations broadcast a new audiotape today, apparently recorded by Saddam Hussein, in which an almost desperate sounding voice resembling that of the former Iraqi dictator urged Iraqis not to cooperate with the American occupation authorities.

The release of the tape, the fourth since the war's end, came as American forces were sporadically attacked west of Baghdad. Witnesses near the city of Falluja, 35 miles west of the capital, described a fierce two-hour firefight between the Americans and insurgents in which at least two American soldiers were wounded. But military officials did not confirm those accounts tonight.

On the tape the speaker acknowledges feeling "bitterness" that some Iraqis are cooperating with the occupation. He goes on to offer former state property to ordinary Iraqis so the Americans cannot take it.

"We must not let things slip away and our situation become desperate," the voice says.

It was impossible to determine tonight if the tape was really that of Mr. Hussein's voice. But Iraqis did not appear to be taking it very seriously. At the main Baghdad bus station, a virtual hive of looted government vehicles, Iraqis were utterly dismissive about the offer made on the tape. Many people had not heard the tape.

The message got twisted a bit as it passed from mouth to mouth; in the end, some understood that the former president had offered amnesty to those who returned government property.

"It's like a joke, a theater piece, what we need now is the chanting and the music," said a man who identified himself only as Abu Ali. "It's over, it's over. He cannot come back, the army is dissolved, there are parties everywhere."

Ahmed Fallah, a 40-year-old pharmacist, said, "We have a proverb in Arabic: 'If your wall is slanted, time won't straighten it.' Does he really think 25 million Iraqis will believe he can straighten his wall now?"

Near Falluja today, several witnesses said a convoy of American military vehicles was traveling eastward just outside the city when several loud explosions rang out and insurgents hidden beyond the road opened fire with small arms.

"The soldiers began shooting wildly, and then they came under missile attack," said Khaled Farhan Suleiman, whose farm is about 200 yards from where the attack took place. "It lasted two hours."

Another witness, Majid Abood, said that at least two American vehicles were destroyed, and that an American helicopter began firing at the insurgents. Some soldiers were wounded, as were some of the

attackers, who numbered at least six, he said.

In Abu Ghraib, just west of Baghdad, an Iraqi woman was killed and another wounded when American soldiers opened fire after a bomb exploded near their convoy, witnesses and relatives of the dead woman said. No Americans were wounded.

"The bomb went off, and the soldiers saw someone standing on the bridge," said Capt. Chris Hockenberry, as he stood near the dead woman's weeping brother, Kamil Sultan.

In Jordan today, Mr. Hussein's daughters, Raghda and Rana, said in television interviews that they last saw their father a week before the war in Iraq started, and that they did not know where he was. The sisters, who were allowed into Jordan on Thursday, declined to discuss their brothers, Uday and Qusay, who were killed on July 22 in a firefight with American forces in the northern city of Mosul.

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